

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council Meeting Minutes (5-1-12) and Comments to the DDA (5-2-12)

First, I want to invite all members of the DDA to our Annual Downtown Potluck Party on Thursday, June 7—Don't miss it. It's a lot of fun.

Last night, Will Hathaway and Erick Lipson also spoke at our CAC meeting where we had a lively discussion of the issues relating to the future of the Library Lot. We agree with them that a plaza space has always been and should be a part of any planning for the future of the top of the underground parking structure. We also agree that there should be a clear-cut process in the future for members of the community to make use of as much as possible of Library Lane for a gathering space that adjoins that plaza. At the same time, we reaffirmed our long-held commitment to the development of a new tax-producing, private development on the major portion of the underground structure.

Whatever we do on the Library Lot should relate to and be a positive benefit to the Ann Arbor District Library. The new Blake Transit Center and public transportation should be carefully integrated into the new development, the future Plaza, and Library Lane. To whatever degree possible future development should support direct pedestrian connectivity of planned Plaza Space and new site construction to Liberty Plaza, Liberty Street frontage, historical elements (Kempf House, Noble House and its carriage house, and nearby historic districts.). And, of course, public art wherever possible.

All of these things are essential to the future development of the Library Lot and, we believe, will have a positive impact on the future vitality of the downtown. We want to be sure that nothing, including temporary parking, should be planned on the Library site that would slow down or conflict with permanent development of the site that includes these possibilities.

We want to congratulate the DDA's Partnership Committee on the very careful way in which they are developing a DDA "Policy Regarding Grant Requests for Brownfield or Other State of Michigan Programs Requiring Local Match." Although this process was stimulated by the 618 South Main project (a project we strongly support), we are confident that the DDA is moving in the direction of developing a consistent policy that will be fair to all future applicants and stimulate other private tax-generating new developments in the downtown.